

REMARKS:

Claims 1-9 remain in the case and are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that the terminal disclaimer has been accepted.

The Examiner has raised a new rejection, with respect to claims 1-9, namely, that under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, it is unclear from the claim and the specification if the needle holding means in claim 1 should really be recited as the needle coupling means as defined in the specification.

The Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

The needle holding means introduced at claim 1 line 8 is exemplified by the needle holding means 50 shown in Fig. 1 and introduced in the specification at page 10 paragraph [0050]. It is noted that the needle holding means may comprise this structure, or any equivalent structure.

The needle holding means 50 is detachably joined to the adapter 30 and functions to guide the proximal (or rear) needle 40 as shown in Fig. 3. As called for in the claim and shown in the specification, the holding means 50 holds the proximal needle 40 on a proximal or rear side of the distal or front needle 16. As disclosed in the specification, at page 11, paragraph [0053], for example, in one embodiment of the invention, the needle holding means 50 is made up of the guide tube 52 into which the needles 16 and 40, after they are coupled, can move. The needle holding means also includes the needle handle in this embodiment which is defined, for example, in claim 2.

This is very different from the needle coupling means discussed on page 10 paragraph [0049].

An example is a proximal or rear end 20 of distal or forward needle 16, that is adapted to be coupled into what is called "coupling engagement" in claim 1, line 11, with the forward or distal end 42 of the proximal or rear needle 40. Claim 1 addresses this feature by first calling for "a second proximal needle that is adapted to be coupled to the first distal needle", and thereafter explaining that the "second proximal needle being moveable through the plug and into coupling engagement with the first distal needle to form coupled needles which move together".

The rear holding means 50 (made up for example by the guard tube 52 and the needle handle 54) only functions to hold the proximal needle 40 on the proximal or rear side of the distal needle 16. This placement must be maintained, both before the assembly of the invention is used, for example as shown in Fig. 2, where the needles 40 and 16 are spaced from each other, and during movement and coupling of the two needles as shown in Fig. 3, and after the device is used and the coupled needles are extracted to a safe and guarded position, as shown in Fig. 4.

Accordingly, claim 1 and the claims depended thereon are believed to be in proper form under 35 U.S.C. 112 and the application and claims are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Although the undersigned attempted to conduct a telephone interview with the Examiner on three separate occasions, the calls of the undersigned were never returned. For this reason and because the application is believed to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned, if any matters still remain in order to reach a conclusion to the prosecution of this case.

Respectfully submitted,



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